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P. 12, AMERICAN FREE PRESS * January 2 & 9, 2006 **Behind the Scenes**
with Michael Collins Piper

What Dan Quayle & Donald Rumsfeld Have in Common

Jewish Newspaper Exposes 'Cerberus' Link

By Michael Collins Piper

If anyone ever had any question as to why Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has been such a major figure inside the Bush administration advancing the interests of the neo-conservative network, the answer to the mystery may have finally been resolved. It's actually been quite profitable for the U.S. defense secretary.

Rumsfeld — along with former Vice President Dan Quayle — has ties to Cerberus Global Investments, a New York-based holding company which, just last month, purchased the Israeli government's interest in Bank Leumi, the second largest bank in Israel.

The revelation came in the Nov. 15 issue of the influential Israeli newspaper, ***Ha'aretz***, which reported that, at least as far back as 2001, Rumsfeld was an investor in the company, citing a report that appeared in the Oct. 3, 2005, issue of ***Business Week***, based on financial disclosure forms that Rumsfeld was required to file under federal ethics laws.

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HAND IN THE COOKIE JAR: Donald Rumsfeld's investments in a foreign-owned company doing business in Iraq have recently come under the microscope of a prominent Jewish newspaper. Such a business relationship as that Rumsfeld maintains with Cerberus Global is prohibited by U.S. ethics law.

That ***Business Week*** report went so far as to describe Cerberus as being "bigger" than even such well-known business giants as McDonald's, 3M, Coca-Cola and Cisco Systems, pointing out that Cerberus controls some 226 Burger King restaurants, the National and Alamo car-rental chains, building products maker Formica Corp. and the old Warner Hollywood Studios.

What is of particular interest regarding Rumsfeld's Cerberus investments (*vis a vis* his insistent demand that the United States invade Iraq and occupy the country, as it does today) is that ***Business Week*** asserted that Cerberus has also "set up military base camps in Iraq."

As far as former Vice President Quayle is concerned, while Quayle is now ensconced as essentially the "front man" for Cerberus, serving as chairman of the board of Cerberus, the real power at Cerberus is the 45-year-old chief executive officer, Stephen Feinberg, described by ***Ha'aretz*** as "a New York Jew with a golden touch" — a "shy wunderkind" who "makes himself scarce around photographers and sends underlings like Cerberus chair Dan Quayle to sign his deals."

So although Quayle's liberal Democratic critics often made fun of the former vice president, questioning his capacities, it's pretty clear that Quayle, after leaving the second highest office in the land, has finally found his niche.

Another major player in Feinberg's operations is Michael Steinhardt, who — according to Avenue magazine — is an "avowed atheist" yet still "one of America's biggest supporters of Jewish and Israeli causes," and a financial backer of such influential American Jewish journals as the New York-based weekly ***Forward*** and the daily ***New York Sun***, a neoconservative daily.

Current U.S. ethics laws do not prohibit past or present U.S. federal officials — such as the defense secretary or the ex-vice president — from having financial interests in companies that are owned by foreign interests or otherwise benefit foreign governments. But there are those who might find a conflict of interest, particularly in the case of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld.

After all, critics note, ***Ha'aretz*** reported that the Israeli government's finance ministry has said that the proceeds of the Cerberus purchase of a controlling interest in Bank Leumi will go toward "paying off Israel's high national debt."

This is particularly ironic, of course, because of Rumsfeld's key role in helping orchestrate the war against Iraq — which was a major aim of the Israeli lobby in the United States. The U.S. engagement against the Arab republic has done much to increase America's national debt, a debt that keeps on growing, even as Rumsfeld's friends at Cerberus are directly involved in establishing the U.S. military presence in the beleaguered country.

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from First Amendment Books and America First Books. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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